

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2016

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2251 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water Resources &
Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-585 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water Resources &
Environment
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-505 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Chairman Gibbs, and Ranking Member Napolitano:

As you work to draft the 2016 Water Resources and Development Act, we respectfully urge consideration and inclusion of Section 7303 of the Senate version (S. 2848), introduced by Senators Inhofe and Boxer. Section 7303 is nearly identical to our legislation, H.R. 4468, the Water Infrastructure Trust Fund Act, which would create a deficit-neutral, dedicated source of revenue for the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), as well as commission an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study on water affordability.

The unmet need of investment in our clean and drinking water systems is well-documented and getting worse, with failing infrastructure and threats to public health stretching far beyond Flint, Michigan. The federal share of investment in water infrastructure, however, has fallen 80% since the early 1980s; currently, Congress only appropriates roughly 5% of the estimated annual need to state revolving funds. At the same time, our water is getting more expensive, with the cost of maintenance for consumers rising at an average of 6% a year. In January 2015, residents in Flint paid the highest water rates of the 500 communities surveyed, almost 3 times the national average.

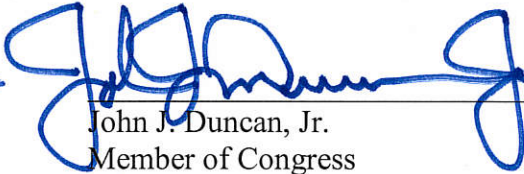
Section 7303 takes a step forward to address our growing water crisis by creating a voluntary program in which companies that depend on our nation's water system can display a label showing participation in water infrastructure investment in return for a small per-unit labelling fee, used to capitalize the Water Infrastructure Trust Fund and distributed to the states through the Clean and Drinking Water SRFs. Section 7303 also directs EPA, in conjunction with the states, to study the water affordability gap faced by low-income populations and analyze barriers and incentives to true value pricing for water services at the local level.

Congress can do a better job of helping states and local governments make much-needed investments in clean and drinking water infrastructure, and creation of the Water Infrastructure Trust Fund is a targeted, bipartisan, and noncontroversial first step. We respectfully urge consideration and inclusion of the enclosed text, Section 7303 of S. 2848, and please contact Paul Balmer in Rep. Blumenauer's office at paul.balmer@mail.house.gov for further information.

Sincerely,



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



John J. Duncan, Jr.
Member of Congress



Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress